

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W
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O R 181103Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3796
INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
CINCPAC HONOLULU IMMEDIATE
USSAG NKP THAILAND IMMEDIATE
USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

S E C R E T SAIGON 3075

EXDIS - MILITARY COMMANDS HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

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WARNING--SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED/NO
FOREIGN DISSEMINATION

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2 DECLASSIFICATION DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE
TAGS: MOPS, VS
SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF NVA OFFENSIVE--SUMMARY FOR PERIOD
ENDING NOON MARCH 18

1. GENERAL:

THE CENTERS OF MAJOR COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN THE PERIOD ENDING
THE MORNING OF MARCH 18 REMAINED MILITARY REGIONS 2 AND 3.
THE EVACUATION OF THE CITIES OF KONTUM AND PLEIKU IS WELL UNDER
WAY NOW, AND THE ROADS LEADING SOUTH AND EAST OF THESE CITIES ARE
REPORTEDLY CROWDED WITH BOTH CIVILIANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL.
BOTH CITIES ARE NEARLY DESERTED, AND AMMUNITION AND POL LEFT
BEHIND IN THE CITIES ARE BEING DESTROYED. IN MR-3, THE EASTERN
THIRD OF THE REGION REMAINS THE CENTER OF ACTIVITY, AS COMMUNIST
FORCES CONTINUE TO PRESS THEIR ATTACKS AGAINST THE TOWNS OF HOAI

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DUC, GIA RAY, AND DINH QUAN. ARVN FORCES ARE HOLDING THEIR

OWN SO FAR.

2. MR-2.

THE EVACUATION OF PLEIKU IS PROCEEDING WITH BOTH MILITARY (INCLUDING ARMOR AND ARTILLERY) AND CIVILIANS LEAVING THE CITY. RECENT CONGEN FLIGHTS OVER THE CITIES OF KONTUM AND PLEIKU INDICATE THAT BOTH ARE NEARLY DESERTED BY NOW. AMMUNITION AND POL ARE REPORTEDLY BEING DESTROYED BY THE EVACUATING FORCES. THE MR-2 HEADQUARTERS HAS BEEN BLOWN UP. THE ROAD LEADING FROM KONTUM IS CROWDED WITH CIVILIANS, AND THAT BETWEEN PLEIKU AND CHEO REO IS CROWDED WITH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY TRAFFIC, INCLUDING APCS, TANKS, ARTILLERY, AND TRUCKS. THE INFLUX OF LARGE NUMBERS OF CIVILIANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL IS CAUSING CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION IN CHEO REO, AND OUR PROV REP THERE REPORTED THE MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER AS TENUOUS. THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE 23D DIVISION, NOW LOCATED ADJACENT TO ROUTE 21 SOME 20 KMS NORTHEAST OF PHUOC AN, IS UNKNOWN.

3. MR-3.

ACTIVITY IN MR-3 WAS AGAIN CENTERED IN THE EASTERN THIRD OF THE REGION, WHERE NVA ATTACKS ON DINH QUAN, HOAI DUC, AND GIA RAY TOWNS CONTINUE. DINH QUAN WAS PENETRATED BY THE COMMUNISTS, BUT ARVN FORCES THERE ARE HOLDING, ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THE TOWN IS REPORTEDLY BURNED OUT. THE VILLAGE OF GIA RAY IS PROBABLY OCCUPIED BY NVA/VC FORCES, AND THE HIGH GROUND OVERLOOKING THE VILLAGE IS UNDER ATTACK. THE ARVN FIREBASE NEARBY CONTINUES TO HOLD, HOAI DUC IS REPORTED TO BE HOLDING.

ROUTES 1 AND 20 IN THE EAST ARE CLOSED BY THE NVA ATTACKS AND MAY REMAIN CLOSED FOR SOME TIME.

THE SITUATION REMAINS QUIET AROUND TAY NINH CITY, AND ROUTE 22 IS STILL OPEN TO TRAFFIC. THERE ARE REPORTS FROM TAY NINH ABOUT SLACKENING OF RF MORALE THERE. THE ARVN FORCES, CONSISTING OF TWO BNS INCLUDING THE 48TH REGT, ON ROUTE 1 WEST OF GO DAU HA HAVE CLEARED THE NVA/VC FROM THE HAMLET SOME 5 KMS FROM GO DAU HA AND ARE CONTINUING THEIR PUSH WESTWARD ON ROUTE 1. IN THE BELIEF THAT THE NVA/VC WILL NOW SHIFT THEIR ATTACK SOUTHEASTWARD FROM THE KHIEM HANH/GO DAU HA AXIS, TO TRY TO CUT ROUTE 1 IN THE TRANG BANG/CU CHI AREA, GVN COMMANDERS HAVE MOVED THE 318TH ARMORED TASK FORCE FROM KHIEM HANH INTO BLOCKING POSITIONS NORTH OF TRANG BANG.

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IN THE FIRST INCIDENT OF ITS KIND IN OVER THREE YEARS, AN UNIDENTIFIED TERRORIST THREW A CAN OF EXPLOSIVES INTO A US CONTRACTOR-OPERATED BUS IN SAIGON ENROUTE TO BIEN HOA. EIGHT PASSENGERS WERE SLIGHTLY INJURED.

FOR THE THIRD DAY IN A ROW, BIEN HOA AIR BASE WAS ROCKETED, BUT WITH NO DAMAGE OR INJURIES.

4. MR-1

MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MR-1 HAS INCREASED SOMEWHAT SINCE YESTERDAY, PARTICULARLY IN QUANG TIN AND QUANG NGAI. SOME FIGHTING IS REPORTED EAST OF ROUTE 1 IN QUANG TIN AND THIS ROAD IS REPORTED BLOCKED IN QUANG NGAI. THE THUA THIEN PROVINCE CHIEF/ MAJOR OF HUE REPORTS THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDERS OF PRESIDENT THIEU, THE MARINE AND AIRBORNE DIVISIONS ARE TO BE WITHDRAWN SHORTLY FROM QUANG TRI AND THUA THIEN AND PULLED BACK TO PROTECT DA NANG. THIS WILL LEAVE THE FIRST ARVN DIVISION, A RANGER GROUP, AND THE RF/PF TO GUARD THESE TWO PROVINCES. HE ALSO EXPECTS THE CITY OF HUE TO RECEIVE SHELLING IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE QUANG TRI PROVINCE CHIEF HAS ADVISED CIVIL SERVANTS IN THAT PROVINCE TO EVACUATE THEIR FAMILIES FURTHER SOUTH. A STEADY STREAM OF CIVIL SERVICE FAMILIES AND OTHERS WAS REPORTED TO BE DEPARTING QUANG TRI AS OF NOON MARCH 17.

5. MR-4.

ACTIVITY IN THE DELTA CONTINUED LIGHT AND SCATTERED DURING THE PAST DAY. FORTY-TWO NVA WERE REPORTED KILLED IN A CONTACT WITH ELEMENTS OF THE 7TH ARVN DIVISION IN DINH TUONG PROVINCE.

6. ICCS.

THE ICCS AND PA&E ARE IN THE PROCESS OF CLOSING DOWN THE TEAM SITES IN QUANG TRI, AN LOC, AND XUAN LOC. THE TEAM SITES AT BAN ME THUOT, CHEO REO, KONTUM AND PLEIKU HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY EVACUATED. ONLY IRANIAN TEAM MEMBERS REMAIN AT THE QUAN LONG AND VI THANH SITES. THE INDONESIAN AND IRANIAN TEAMS ARE STILL IN PLACE IN VINH LONG AND KHANH HUNG.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EMERGENCY EVACUATION, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchantr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SAIGON03075
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2 SIFICATION DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750094-0116
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750340/aaaabjuu.tel
Line Count: 146
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchantr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <08 OCT 2003 by buchantr>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGHLIGHTS OF NVA OFFENSIVE--SUMMARY FOR PERIOD ENDING NOON MARCH 18
TAGS: MOPS, VS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006